

Document Based Exercise–Slavery and the Declaration of Independence

Today, I want to know what you know about historical thinking. Historians ask questions about the past and make conclusions about the evidence (documents) they have. For this activity, you will use the documents provided to answer the following question:

How was the argument over slavery an argument over the meaning of the Declaration of Independence?

Task 1: Activating Prior Knowledge. Think about what the ideals of the Declaration of Independence mean. Write them down and then turn to your partner and share your definitions. Add to your information if necessary.

life–

liberty–

persute of happyness–

popular soverenty–

Task 2: Looking at Historical Documents. Take a look at the packet of documents that you were given. Spend the next **10 minutes** reviewing your packet, thinking about what questions come up. Pick three documents that are the most interesting, (and maybe most confusing) and complete the graphic organizer below.

Documents I found interesting/ confusing:	My 2 questions about each document are:
Document A	<p>1. where in the document does he use the idea of Equality.</p> <p>2.what is he talking about in this document</p>
Document B	<p>1.</p> <p>2.</p>
Document D	<p>1.</p> <p>2.</p>

Task 3: Understanding Historical Documents. Your next step is to look at your documents again and find out what they tell you about each historic characters' beliefs on slavery and how their interpretation of the Declaration of Independence was used to support their perspective. Remember, you will need to use these documents to answer the following question: **How was the argument over slavery an argument over the meaning of the Declaration of Independence?**

Complete the table below.

Documents I chose:	What I think this document says about the historic characters' perspective on slavery	What evidence (details) I used from each document
Document A	what I think that this document is trying to tell me is that we are doing the exact thing that king george did to us, to the blacks.	in this document it says that "On the question of liberty, as a principle, we are not what we have been. When we were the political slaves of King George, and wanted to be free, we called the maxim** that ``all men are created equal'' a self evident** truth; but now when we have grown fat, and have lost all dread of being slaves ourselves, we have become so greedy to be masters that we call the same maxim** ``a self-evident lie'' The fourth of July has not quite dwindled** away; it is still a great day---for burning fire-crackers!!!"
Document B	I think that the character in this document is trying to say is that, he does not believe in blacks having power.	

Document D		
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Let's review:

- In **task 1** you interpreted the ideals of the Declaration of Independence.
- In **task 2** you analyzed historical documents
- In **task 3** you analyzed three characters' beliefs on slavery and how their interpretations of the Declaration of Independence were used to support their perspectives.

Task 4:

You will now provide a response to:

How was the argument over slavery an argument over the meaning of the Declaration of Independence?

- Must contain thesis statement
- 3 statements that support your thesis using the primary documents. Cite documents by referring to them as Document A, Document B, etc.
- Use prior knowledge to fill in the gaps

How the argument over slavery an argument over the Declaration of independence is that, they thought that slavery was not going against our rights and the rights of others. they thought that the black community was not being talked about in the Declaration of independence.